

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1.     A method comprising the steps of:  
2           coupling a patient to an energy source via a universal electrode suitable for  
3 use upon both adults and children;  
4           electronically determining whether the patient requires defibrillation; and  
5           delivering an electrical waveform characterized by less than or equal to  
6 approximately 150 Joules of energy to the patient.

1           2.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:  
2 determining whether the patient is a child.

1           3.     The method of claim 1,  
2 wherein the universal electrode comprises an electrode having a foil layer with  
3 an opening disposed therein.

1           4.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:  
2 compensating for patient-dependent impedance during electrical waveform  
3 delivery,  
4 wherein the universal electrode comprises an electrode having a foil layer with  
5 an opening disposed therein.

1           5.     A method comprising the steps of:  
2 coupling a patient to a universal electrode suitable for use upon both adults  
3 and children;  
4           electronically determining whether the patient requires defibrillation; and  
5           delivering a first electrical waveform characterized by greater than  
6 approximately 25 Joules and less than approximately 50 Joules of energy to the  
7 patient.

1           6.     The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of:  
2 determining whether a patient is a child.

1           7.     The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of determining  
2 whether defibrillation was successful.

1           8.     The method of claim 5 further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining whether defibrillation was successful; and

3 delivering a second electrical waveform characterized by an energy greater  
4 than that associated with the first electrical waveform to the patient.

1 9. The method of claim 5 further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining whether defibrillation was successful; and  
3 delivering a second electrical waveform characterized by an energy greater  
4 than that associated with the first electrical waveform to the patient,  
5 wherein the second electrical waveform is characterized by an energy greater  
6 than 50 Joules.

1 10. The method of claim 5,  
2 wherein the universal electrode comprises an electrode having a foil layer with  
3 an opening disposed therein.

1 11. A method comprising the steps of:  
2 electronically determining whether a patient requires defibrillation;  
3 delivering a first electrical waveform characterized by an energy greater than  
4 approximately 25 Joules and less than approximately 50 Joules to the patient;  
5 determining whether defibrillation was successful; and  
6 successively delivering higher-energy electrical waveforms to the patient until  
7 a delivery of an electrical waveform characterized by a maximum energy target  
8 occurs.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of successively delivering  
2 higher-energy electrical waveforms to the patient is performed according to an energy  
3 increment plan.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the maximum energy target equals  
2 approximately 100 Joules.

1 14. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of coupling the  
2 patient to an energy source via a universal electrode suitable for use upon both  
3 adults and children.

1 15. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of coupling the  
2 patient to an energy source via a universal electrode suitable for use with both adults

3 and children, wherein the universal electrode comprises an electrode having a foil  
4 layer with an opening disposed therein.

1 16. A method comprising the steps of:  
2 coupling a patient to an energy source via a universal electrode suitable for  
3 use upon both adults and children;  
4 determining whether the patient is an adult or a child;  
5 electronically determining whether the patient requires defibrillation;  
6 delivering a first electrical waveform characterized by an energy level  
7 appropriate for an adult in the event that the patient is an adult; and  
8 delivering a second electrical waveform characterized by an energy level  
9 appropriate for a child in the event that the patient is a child.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the first electrical waveform is  
2 characterized by an energy of approximately 150 Joules.

1 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the second electrical waveform is  
2 characterized by an energy of approximately 50 Joules.

1 19. An automated external defibrillation system comprising:  
2 an energy source;  
3 an electrode interface;  
4 an electrode signal management unit coupled to the energy source and the  
5 electrode interface;  
6 a control unit coupled to the electrode signal management unit;  
7 an adult/pediatric mode control that indicates whether the automated external  
8 defibrillation system is to operate in an adult mode or a pediatric mode; and  
9 a set of universal electrodes suitable for use upon both adults and children,  
10 the universal electrodes coupled to the electrode interface.

1 20. The automatic external defibrillation system of claim 19,  
2 wherein the universal electrode comprises an electrode having a foil layer with  
3 an opening disposed therein.

1 21. An automated external defibrillation system comprising:  
2 an energy source;

3 an electrode interface;  
4 an electrode signal management unit coupled to the energy source and the  
5 electrode interface;  
6 a control unit coupled to the electrode signal management unit; and  
7 a set of universal electrodes suitable for use upon both adults and children,  
8 the universal electrodes coupled to the electrode interface.

1 22. The automated external defibrillation system of claim 21,  
2 wherein the system is configured to deliver approximately 150 Joules of energy to the  
3 universal electrodes.

1 23. The automated external defibrillation system of claim 21,  
2 wherein the system is configured to deliver less than 150 Joules of energy to the  
3 universal electrodes.